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TOHAK 09

U.S. AIDE REPORTS A MIDEAST TIP-OFF

KISSINGER SAID TO HAVE BEEN TOLD EARLY THAT NO SIDE
INTENDED AN ATTACK.

BY LESLIE H. GELB

WASHINGTON, NOV. 17--ISRAEL NOTIFIED THE UNITED STATES LAST THURSDAY OF HER DECISION TO PARTLY MOBILIZE HER FORCES BUT NOT TO ATTACK, AND ON FRIDAY SECRETARY OF STATE KISSINGER RECEIVED ASSURANCES FROM SYRIA AND EGYPT THAT THEY HAD NO INTENTION OF STARTING A WAR, ACCORDING TO A WELL-PLACED ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL. OTHER ADMINISTRATION OFFICIALS DECLINED TO COMMENT WHEN ASKED WHETHER THE SOVIET UNION HAD PROVIDED ANY ASSURANCES ABOUT KYTS PLANS OR ANY DETAILS ON ITS ARMS SHIPMENTS TO SYRIA.

MEANWHILE, THE DANGER OF A SOVIET-AMERICAN CONFRONTATION OVER THE MIDDLE EAST, AND FEARS OF ANOTHER ARAB OIL EMBARGO WERE EXPRESSED IN A MAGAZINE INTERVIEW WITH PRESIDENT FORD, MADE PUBLIC TODAY. HE SAID IN THE INTERVIEW WITH U.S. NEWS & WORLD REPORT THAT "IT OUGHT TO BE OBVIOUS TO EVERYBODY THAT WE CANNOT GO ON INDEFINITELY WITH THE VERY DELICATE CIRCUMSTANCES THAT EXIST BETWEEN" ISRAEL AND HER ARAB NEIGHBORS.

THEN, TO UNDERLINE HIS POINT, HE ADDED, "OR FAIL TO TAKE INTO ACCOUNT THE LEGITIMATE INTERESTS OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE."

THE MILITARY QUESTION

ASKED ABOUT THE POSSIBILITY OF AMERICAN MILITARY ACTION TO SECURE OIL SUPPLIES FROM THE MIDDLE EAST, MR. FORD SAID, "I KNOW OF NO PLAN IN THAT REGARD."

SIMILARLY, WHEN MR. KISSINGER WAS ASKED AT A NEWS CONFERENCE LAST FRIDAY ABOUT THE POSSIBILITY OF AMERICAN INTERVENTION IN ANOTHER ARAB-ISRAELI WAR, HE REPLIED THAT THERE WERE NO "CONTINGENCY PLANS." BUT HE ADDED:

"IT IS CLEAR THAT THE UNITED STATES INTENTION, UNLESS THERE SHOULD BE OTHER OUTSIDE INTERVENTION, WOULD BE TO CONFINE ITS ROLE TO WHAT IT HAS BEEN."

THIS IS THE DIPLOMATIC SIGNAL THAT ISRAELI DIPLOMATS ACKNOWLEDGE THEY ALWAYS LOOK FOR. THEY ARE REPORTED TO VIEW IT AS A WARNING TO MOSCOW TO STAY OUT OF ANY POTENTIAL FIGHTING AND AS A REASSURANCE TO ISRAEL THAT THE UNITED STATES WOULD NOT STAND BY IF MOSCOW DID NOT STAND BY.

SINCE THAT KISSINGER NEWS CONFERENCE AND THE REPORTS OF THE ISRAELI MOBILIZATION, HIGH ADMINISTRATION OFFICIALS HAVE BEEN TRYING TO PLA DOWN THE IMMEDIATE DANGER.

ONE AUTHORITATIVE ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL, IN TELLING OF THE EVENTS OF THE LAST FEW DAYS, SAID THAT ON THURSDAY MORDECHAI SHALEV, AN OFFICIAL OF THE ISRAELI EMBASSY HERE, TOLD A SENIOR STATE DEPARTMENT OFFICIAL THAT ISRAEL HAD MOBILIZED "SEVERAL THOUSAND" TROOPS. THIS WAS REPORTEDLY DONE IN RESPONSE TO ISRAELI INTELLIGENCE REPORTS OF A SYRIAN BUILD-UP OF ARTILLERY AND TANKS NEAR THE GOLAN HEIGHTS, COUPLED WITH AN UNUSUALLY LARGE NUMBER OF SOVIET SHIPS UNLOADING AT THE SYRIAN PORT OF PATAKIA.

NEITHER ISRAELI NOR AMERICAN INTELLIGENCE WERE SAID TO HAVE KNOWN HOW MANY OF THESE 50 OR SO SHIPS CONTAINED MILITARY EQUIPMENT, BUT SOME OF THE SHIPS DID.

MR. SHALEV TOLD THE STATE DEPARTMENT THAT THE ISRAELI CABINET HAD JUST MADE THE DECISION TO MOBLIZE AND THAT IT WAS "PRECAUTIONARY," TO GUARD AGAINST A SURPRISE SYRIAN ATTACK, AND WAS NOT OFFENSIVE IN NATURE, THE UNITED STATES OFFICIAL SAID. MR. SHALEV APPARENTLY ASKED THE UNITED STATES TO SEEK SIMILAR ASSURANCES FROM THE OTHER PARTIES INVOLVED.

AT HIS NEWS CONFERENCE, FRIDAY-AND BEFORE THE ISRAELI MOBILIZATION BECAME PUBLIC-MR. KISSINGER HEDGED ON THE ISSUE OF WHEN HE HAD LEARNED OF THE ISRAELI MOVE. "THIS RECENT FLARE-UP HAS ONLY COME TO OUR ATTENTION IN THE LAST FEW HOURS," HE SAID.

THE CABLES FLY

MR. KISSINGER REPORTEDLY SENT CABLES FRIDAY TO THE HEADS OF STATE OF SYRIA, EGYPT AND SAUDI ARABIA. THE SYRIANS AND THE EGYPTIANS QUICKLY CABLED BACK THAT THEY HAD NO INTENTION OF LAUNCHING AN ATTACK, AND KING FAISAL SAID HE WOULD DO WHAT HE COULD TO CALM THE WATERS, ACCORDING TO THE UNITED STATES OFFICIAL.

MR. KISSINGER HAD BREAKFAST YESTERDAY WITH AMBASSADOR ANATOLY F. DOBYNIN OF THE SOVIET UNION AND A "SMALL PART" OF THEIR CONVERSATION WAS SAID TO HAVE BEEN ABOUT THE MIDDLE EAST. HE THEN HAD LUNCH WITH AMBASSADOR SIMCHA DINITZ OF ISRAEL AND MR. SHALEV AND PAINS WERE TAKEN TO CONCEAL THE FACT THAT THE LUNCH HAD BEEN ARRANGED ONLY THE DAY BEFORE.

AMERICAN DIPLOMATS HAVE BEEN TELLING ISRAELI COLLEAGUES RECENTLY OF THEIR PESSIMISM ABOUT SYRIA'S APPROVING A NEW MANDATE FOR THE UNITED NATIONS PEACE-KEEPING FORCE, IN THE GOLAN HEIGHTS AREA. THE AGREEMENT EXPIRES AT THE END OF THE MONTH. IT COULD NOT BE LEARNED IF MR. KISSINGER CONVEYED ANYTHING ON THE SUBJECT TO THE ISRAELIS YESTERDAY.

HE DID REPORTEDLY TELL THEM OF THE ASSURANCES FROM EGYPT AND SYRIA BUT NOT ABOUT THE ASSURANCES FROM SAUDI ARABIA OR THE RUSSIANS. A HIGH STATE DEPARTMENT OFFICIAL DID SAY THAT THE GENERAL KISSINGER LINE ON THE RUSSIANS WAS THAT "THEY WOULD BE OUT OF THEIR MINDS TO TRY TO STIR UP TROUBLE IN THE MIDDLE EAST NOW."

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